



Practical Interculturality through the Funds of Knowledge Strategy in FSL

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Objective

To illustrate concrete ways in which Funds of Knowledge (FKN) can be promoted and integrated in French as a Second Language (FSL) teaching and learning through pedagogical practices that foster inclusion for diverse students and value their communities by connecting classroom learning to lived experiences.

Setting the Context

French-speaking countries around the world are recognized today as part of the *francophonie plurielle*, contributing to multifaceted cultural and linguistic exchanges, with a shared history of colonization. FKN seeks to address inequities in valuing global knowledge by fostering inclusive activities and practices. In Canada, there is growing interest in FKN strategies due to increasing diverse student populations. The current resource takes the principles of FKN and proposes practical applications in the FSL classroom.

“La langue française s'enrichit constamment par la diversité des cultures qui la pratiquent.”(Anonymous)

A Brief History of FKN

In the early 1990s an influx of Mexican migrants crossed the Arizona border into several major cities where they lived in segregated areas. Many of the teachers were from middle class suburban backgrounds that created gaps in terms of life experience and cultural knowledge. The University of Arizona, Faculty of Education, sought to help the teachers through FKN, a strategy now being used all across America for teacher candidates working in urban education.

In this video, Louis Moll, one of the original architects, explains how FKN has been incorporated into the classroom.

 Funds of Knowledge

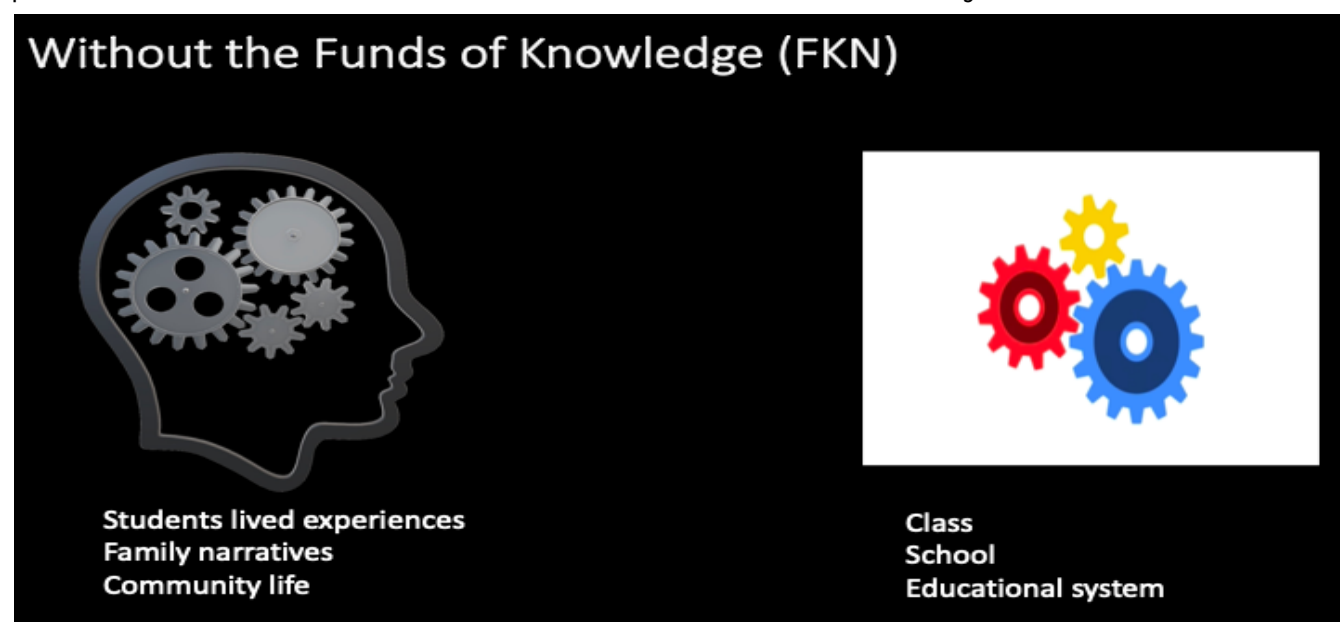
What is FKN?

FKN is a classroom strategy to reflect, explore and promote cultural inclusion based on knowledge from students' communities and cultural backgrounds. Teachers become facilitators of conversations that allow students to open up about their life experiences and utilize them as guides in planning lessons.

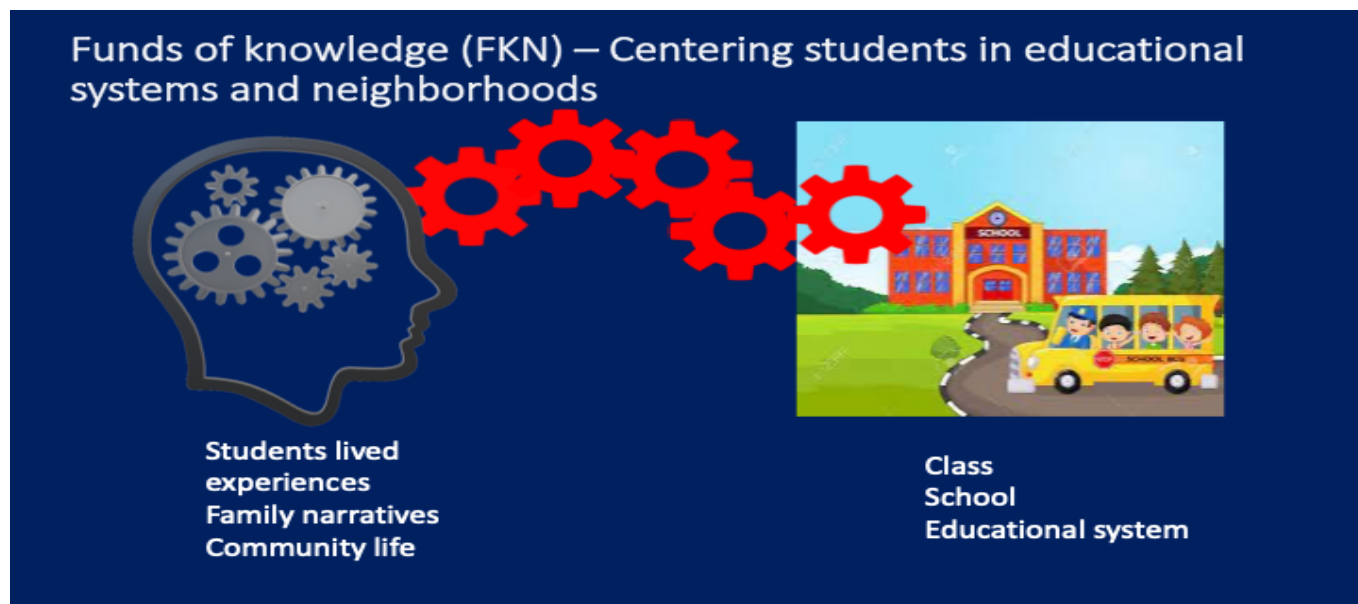
“The teacher is, of course, an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves” - Paolo Freire (1921 - 1997)

The two illustrations below attempt to capture the difference the implementation of FKN strategies can make with respect to student experience in the school.

Without FKN the student and school are disconnected, living in two separate worlds. Students feel they have to constantly code switch, stay guarded / barrier - fence / perform and “can’t be their true authentic self” because they don’t feel valued.



With FKN a nexus of culture and language is created within community contexts connecting learning and lived experiences (Rowsell, 2007).



FKN in Action

Teachers can construct lessons with social justice themes and equity-oriented curricula to transform perspectives that value diversity.

Example 1:

An example of an inclusive learning activity can be about how people celebrate various New Years (Asian, Persian, and Western) to show how different cultures celebrate the transition from one year to the other according to solar or lunar calendars.

Example 2:

Traditionally, in December, students may be asked to write a letter to Santa, however, without considering the fact that many students may not celebrate the holiday being promoted. To cultivate FKN in this lesson, the task can be, instead, presented as 'write a wish list' and then provide students options as to whom they could address it to, including Santa Claus, a grandparent in another country, a fairy godmother or a genie/jinn.

The four resources below illustrate how educators have used FKN strategies:

- 1) Math Class - [Part 1 Funds of Knowledge](#) [Part 2 Funds of Knowledge](#)
- 2) How to identify and implement FKN - [Funds of Knowledge Toolkit](#)
- 3) FKN in Preschool - [How To Use Funds Of Knowledge in your Classroom and Create Better Connections - No Time For Flash Card](#)

FKN and the FSL Curriculum

The goals of FSL education in Ontario-Canada have changed over recent decades. Before 2013, elementary and secondary FSL curricula aimed to help students develop “appreciation of French culture in Canada and in other parts of the world” (OME, 1998, p. 2). Recent publications aim to prepare students for global citizenship (OME, 2013, 2014) influenced by increasing internationalization, interdependence and interconnectedness across time and space (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000), and newcomers to Canada that support demographic, economic, and cultural growth.

For these reasons, incorporating Funds of Knowledge (FKN) strategies can help:

- develop a deeper understanding among diverse international and domestic students
- foster inclusion and equity in FSL classrooms, local neighborhoods and Canadian society.

How can teachers integrate FKN in FSL?

FKN is realized through open dialogue and discussion.

Start thinking about how to ask open ended questions:

- How do you see or not see yourself and your community in the learning?
- How do you see or not see yourself and your home life in the classroom resources?
- How do you perceive your linguistic insecurities as you learn French?
- How do you perceive bilingualism or plurilingualism at the individual and societal levels?

Concrete Examples to Implement FKN

General ideas from the FKN literature	Our recommendations for specific actions to incorporate FKN into FSL teaching practices
Seek to create family interconnections with FKN as sources of students’ interests to be incorporated into daily classroom learning.	Conversations about deep issues can facilitate language learning responses to events and express emotions authentically using appropriate French vocabulary to indicate shock, dismay, and sympathy. For example, current events in Francophone countries can be a great starting point for conversations, especially in higher grades.

General ideas from the FKN literature	Our recommendations for specific actions to incorporate FKN into FSL teaching practices
	Possible sources : https://www.infos-jeunes.com/ (through school board subscription) https://ici.radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/maj (Actualités pour les jeunes) https://information.tv5monde.com/les-jt/monde (option to use by linguistic competency level)
Include families' beliefs, morals, and discipline in education (Riojas-Cortez, 2001 as cited in Hedges et al, 2011) by connecting inter-generational extended familial, and cultural contexts.	Teachers can reflect on how to approach asking students questions about their diverse backgrounds. A possible activity is to promote intergenerational connections by interviewing family members about their personal histories from different countries, using French as the linguistic vehicle. This activity provides a good opportunity to acquire French vocabulary to illustrate family ties and histories.
Seek to create community inter-connections with FKN as sources of students' interests to be incorporated into daily classroom learning.	Explore the local restaurants, churches, businesses, community centers, mosques, temples, library French section, to see if and how the Francophonie is represented in the community and creating language learning activities based on these experiences. Examine the history of local neighborhoods to find out who lived on the land (for example, the history of the Native community, immigrants, and other groups whose stories have been lost) A starting point could be a site such as https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/neighbourhoods-communities/neighbourhood-profiles/ Une personnalité pour chaque quartier Tourisme Montréal (mtl.org)
Seek to create peer teacher, teacher student as well as student student interconnections with FKN as sources of students' interests to be incorporated into daily classroom learning.	While English teachers could have students write essays, FSL teachers, due to students' reduced language competency, could have students work on presentations or create projects on their families' heritage. These classroom activities allow for engaging vocabulary learning as well as oral and written skills development in French.

General ideas from the FKN literature	Our recommendations for specific actions to incorporate FKN into FSL teaching practices
	FSL teachers could also gain from having familiarity with the communities their students live in and belong to. This way, they can connect to their students FKN by engaging in conversations about life experiences or practices in the home. For example, fasting during Ramadan, Persian Spring and New Years' celebrations.
Consider daily routines in household functioning - fixing cars, medical and healing practices, cooking, sewing, parenting, family hierarchies	Below is a video linking a FKN activity such as 'baking' to the mathematical concept of fractions. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8QyWa5lwQI&t=54s&ab_channel=KatherineCarlton The same can be done for French - where vocabulary for ingredients and names of dishes can be taught by valuing students' backgrounds. Literacy skills can be enhanced through reading new recipes and writing them (using the imperative, units of measure). Students can also create a classroom cook book.
Include narratives of life experiences and examines routines in the community - personal communication, sociolinguistic conventions, solving problems, decision making processes, the way people relate to cultural hierarchies	Projects such as <i>Les sacs d'histoires</i>, where students circulate in their families a 'story bag' with stories in French and in the students' first language, can reinforce links between the school, the classroom and the students' families, cultures and narratives. (To learn more about the concept, you can consult Les Sacs d'histoires: mode d'emploi and to see how the project was implemented in a school in Marseille, you can check out this page). Stories can also open the way to explorations of the different sociolinguistic hierarchies and conventions - how do children and young adults address elders ? Who speaks first ? What pronoun to use in what situation (i.e. vous and tu) ? What are the different ways that communities greet each other (i.e deux ou trois bises)?
Have you got any more ideas to share about ways in which you have integrated or would like to integrate FKN in your FSL teaching ? You can share them by accessing the table below.  FKN Ideas from the community	

Possible Barriers to Implementing FKN

In the larger context of FSL, there may be various forms of resistance to racial inclusion. Teachers should be prepared to anticipate resistance to incorporating FKN into FSL classes from all stakeholders: students, parents, community leaders, colleagues and administrators (Jefford, 2014).

In most lesson planning, objectives and processes to achieve learning goals are clearly stated and outlined. But discussing racial, culture and ethnic issues can be uncharted territory. Teachers may be hesitant about engaging in conversations about race. FKN begins as a collaborative inquiry approach that can build positive relationships, democratize community and resist reproducing racial hierarchies.

Resistance can be more or less subtle. The general expectation is to teach content related to French culture and French Canadian culture and reflect white eurocentrism. Resistance can take the form of institutional barriers, media stereotypes and individual acts of discrimination. Using the methods outlined below can be useful for teachers interested in democratizing teaching and addressing negative stereotypes by portraying *knowledges* from racialized cultures as valuable.

Methods to support utilizing FKN:

- 1) **Contributive** - refers to examining the diversity in the Francophone communities. A cogent explanation of French colonialism and the impacts on the colonized can be presented, in the context of ideas, music and scientific contributions from the global perspective as an integral part of all resources and materials used in the classroom.
- 2) **Additive** - refers to piggybacking onto a designated day or month of equity seeking groups. For example, Indigenous Month can be scaffolded to discuss Indigenous Francophone communities and the Métis.
- 3) **Transformative** - reading bilingual books, music and art from racially diverse French cultures.
- 4) **Social Action** - doing activities that will interact with diverse classrooms around the world. For instance, setting up opportunities to speak with a classroom in Québec or other geographies (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010).

The table below presents how these methods can be applied to different scenarios :

Situation	Analysis	Next Steps/ Methods
Barrier A vice-principal from Cameroon recently bought a home in a small town. When he went to register his son and daughter at the French immersion school, he was told by the office staff that he was not eligible to register his children. Despite the fact that there were immigrants from a few former French colonies in Africa, none of the children were registered at the French immersion school, resulting in a lack of diversity in the FSL program.	Systemic racism Neighborhoods tend to reflect settler colonial traditions. Gatekeepers, such as frontline staff, can reproduce Eurocentrism through creating barriers for racialized families and denying access to registering for FSL programs. Not all stakeholders may be aware of global Francophone communities, such as Lebanon in the Middle East, Cote d'Ivoire in Africa and French Guiana in the Caribbean. It is important to ensure that all stakeholders from frontline staff to administrators can see FSL communities in a global and racially diverse context.	Additive and Social Action Critical analysis on institutional practices - when seeking to implement FKN, it would be prudent for teachers to examine the institutional practices of why there may be a lack of diversity and why racialized groups may not be present or feel the school is a safe space. Many neighborhoods can be racially homogenous so it may be challenging for teachers to include a wide range of FKN, if at all. In this case, teachers can examine historical reasons as to why Native voices were erased from the area the school is located. Teachers can do a deep dive into the school's history. Teachers can form groups to work together to use the additive approach by linking with Indigenous to share about Métis elders' teachings and Louis Riel or Black history month about Africville in Nova Scotia.
Curricula A social justice FSL teacher eagerly approached her elementary class to discuss FKN. Much to her dismay, parents complained that they were sending their kids to be taught Canadian ways, not irrelevant knowledge.	Ethnocentrism While traditional school learning fosters national pride, it can also result in ethnocentric attitudes.	Transformative and Contributive Teachers can use materials that reflect diverse immigrants who have contributed throughout Canadian history. For example, teachers can discuss Viola Davis Desmond and Lincoln Alexander. Then teachers can leverage discussions about racially diverse global French people who have contributed to the world, such as Raoul Diagne.

What if my class isn't diverse?

FKN can help educators be inclusive even in homogenous FSL classrooms. Canada is a settler colony and therefore, there will be celebrations of Indigenous, Black History and other voices that have been lost. FKN can help teachers revisit historical narratives that were erased. For example, the history of Africville is an example of Black History in Canada.

 [LIVRE ENFANT || AFRICVILLE](#)

The idea is expressed through *Sankofa*, a Ghanaian concept, that seeks to go back and retrieve that which was lost in order to move forward in the future.

What type of narratives do you think would be most suitable to experience *Sankofa* in your context of FSL teaching and learning?

- Historical narratives
- Stories
- Tales
- Songs
- Visuals, visual stories
- Movies
- Personal stories
- Learning journeys of second languages



<https://sankofa.org/about>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Lesson Template

In this section, we provide a general template for a lesson rooted in FKN followed by two concrete examples for FSL teachers.

Lesson Template

Theme/Subject: _____ Unit: _____

Grade/level: _____

Learning goals:

1. Reflection

- *Why am I teaching this topic?*
- *What do I want students to learn?*

2. Funds of knowledge

- *How am I going to include students' stories and their families in the learning?*
- *How do I include the local community's sociocultural values in the learning?*
- *How am I going to include my story in the learning?*
- *Which transferable skills do I plan to develop through this lesson?*

3. Curriculum

Assessment of intercultural competence (e.g., FKN) is characterized by its potential for enhancing good quality learning. Under this approach, assessment is not an exact science (Gipps, 1994). We must find appropriate ways of interpreting learners' competence, identifying underlying understanding, metacognition, and the ability to reflect on one's thinking and response to experience (Byram, 2021).

Assessment through a portfolio, self-evaluation, and a language passport will give the teacher the opportunity to assess learners' 'deep' learning.

4. Resources I will use during this learning unit

5. Possible activities to teach this theme

Appendix 2: Concrete Example #1 (Lesson on Immigration)

Lesson Template

Theme/Subject: Immigration

Unit: _____

Grade: Grade 7/8 French Immersion

Learning goals: analyse the displacement experienced by various groups and communities, including Indigenous communities, French speaking communities who were living in or who came to Canada between 1800 and 1850

2. Reflection (possible ideas)

- Teaching about immigration will promote cultural understanding of diversity in Canada?
- Teaching about immigration will give historical perspective (History/social studies)
- Teaching about immigration can raise awareness of human rights issues related to immigration
- Teaching about immigration will empower marginalized groups

2. Funds of knowledge (possible answers)

To include student's stories and their families:

- Students can share their own family immigration stories or experiences.
- Students can interview their family members about their immigration experience.
- Invite guest speakers from diverse backgrounds, including students' families, to share their stories.

To include the local community:

- Take students on field trips to local cultural centers, museums, or immigrant communities within your area
- Encourage students to engage with local immigrant communities

3. Curriculum and evaluation

Portfolio: A portfolio identifies the points for improvement while allowing the learner to visualize their progress. Each student is provided with the same assignments for the portfolio, but the content of the course differs for each student, thus demonstrating their FKN on an individual and community level.

Project-based learning (PBL) is an effective instructional approach that can be designed to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their FKN through engaging projects rooted in student-led themes, reflecting their cultural, racial and everyday lived experiences. (Article about PBL on PowerSchool)

Self-evaluation for teachers: To reflect on the relevance of FKN in the classroom, teachers can use online shared journals with other teachers that will help their professional development. Diversity in today's classrooms allows for many opportunities for teachers to learn from their students' FKN. Even when classrooms are racially and culturally homogenous, teachers can encourage projects that examine voices which have been historically erased such as from the Indigenous and Black communities.

4. Resources I will use during this learning unit

- The teacher can become a member of the Bibliothèque des Amériques. The membership is FREE.
- Teachers and students will be able to share personal stories about immigration, feelings of fear and incertitude about being in a new land and about leaving their original country. The whole class can also brainstorm ways people can welcome newcomers.
- Teachers and students will be able to talk about feelings (avoir peur, être content(e), triste, confus(e), embarrassé(e), soulagé(e),).

Suggested resources:

- Suggested video : **Venue de loin** - chanson de Corneille en français
- Suggested reading **Le mystère de la Lucarne** by Paul Bosc
- Suggested reading **Réfugiés** par Alan Gatz
- Suggested vide : Dans ce [court métrage d'animation, Saoussan](#), une fillette ayant connu les affres de la guerre dans son pays, fait de gros efforts pour s'adapter à sa nouvelle vie au Canada.

5. Possible activities to teach this theme

Minds on

- Teacher will introduce the word immigration.
- Teacher can share her or his story or family story of immigration.
- Teacher can ask students what they know about the subject, and will either send a questionnaire home to be filled out by the family members (in their own language, English, or French), or ask students to research internationally known immigrants (e.g., Arnold Schwarzenegger (Austria), Bob Marley (Jamaica), Brin (Russia), Einstein (Germany), Jackie Chan (Hong Kong, China)).
- The student will share the result of the interview in their preferred language.
- Teachers can invite the family to share their experiences of immigrating to Canada. Families can participate in learning through: Video conferences, Class visits, Show and tell (students or family members share heirlooms, photos, magazine, newspapers, with classmates and teacher to explain their journeys)

Appendix 3: Concrete Example #2 (Lesson on Headwear)

Lesson Template

Theme/Subject: Headwear **Unit:** _____
Grade: Grade: 5 French immersion

Learning goals: Students will learn the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation.

3. Reflection (possible ideas)

- **Why am I teaching this topic?** We have students from diverse ethnicities in the school. It's important to understand that even a baseball cap has a cultural value for some of us.
- **What do I want students to learn?** We express our cultures and beliefs through many channels, and headwear is just one of them. The ways we express our cultures must be respected and appreciated, but not appropriated and misused.

2. Funds of knowledge (possible answers)

How am I going to include students' stories and their families in the learning? I will ask students about the importance and value of wearing headwear.

- "La quête identitaire à travers les cheveux afros" (CF Radio Canada) (audio for teachers to better understand the subject).

How do I include the local community's sociocultural values in the learning? Depending on the student population diversity, either ask students to share their headwear or show pictures to begin a conversation.

How am I going to include my story in the learning?

- (I will introduce the unit with my story. (for example, in Northeast Brazil, the 'vaqueiro' wears a special hat).
- After my example, I will ask students the importance and value of wearing headwear.

Which transferable skills do I plan to develop through this lesson?

- critical thinking, global citizenship, communication and collaboration.

3. Curriculum and evaluation

Language expectations:

The Ontario Curriculum Grades 4 to 8 - Core, Extended and Immersion

4. Resources I will use during this learning unit

In "Comme un million de papillons noirs", Laura Nsafou (2019) praises Afro-style hair. Through the story of Adé, the French author and assertive Afro-feminist blogger, teaches black girls to appreciate their appearance.

The story *Comme un million de papillons noirs* read by the author via Youtube, Livres pour Enfants Noirs.

5. Possible activities to teach this theme

To teach about the cultural value of headwear (e.g., les tresses, le hijab, le niqab, le foulard, le patka, la casquette)

Teachers can choose one of the following links to introduce the ways people express their cultures through headwear. These are different ways people can express themselves, each individual is a cultural individual; therefore, even wearing a baseball cap is part of a culture.

<https://fashionista.com/2018/02/gucci-fall-2018-review#&gid=ci0222083720002702&pid=gucci-rf18-0013>

<https://blog.nationalgeographic.org/2018/03/11/insight-into-kyrgyz-identity-through-hats-hijabs-and-other-types-of-head-coverings/>

Students will learn the different vocabulary (e.g., tresses le hijab, le niqab, le foulard, le patka, la casquette). They will use the photos to practice the verbs aimer, avoir, être; and also les couleurs, les tailles,)

Collaboration

In groups, students will choose a type of headwear and talk about its cultural importance. They will complete the following sentences:

Possible sentence starters:

- Nous avons choisi _____ (e.g., les tresses)
- Les tresses symbolisent _____ (e.g., quelques cultures africaines)
- Le porte des tresses représentent _____ (e.g., l'âge, la religion, le statut social)
- Un fait intéressant _____ (pendant l'esclavage, les tresses étaient utilisé pour transmettre des messages. Par exemple, pour signaler que quelqu'un voulait s'enfuir).

Teacher will share her or his story or family story. (e.g., the teacher can show the picture of the 'vaqueiro' and ask them why they think they wear that hat (to protect themselves from the heat, rain, and the cacti thorns). Chapéu de couro (indumentária) via Wikipedia.

As a voluntary activity, if students wear headwear, they will talk to their families and will find a way to explain how important the headwear is to him or her. They will share either their own headwear and will use the text below to introduce the subject.

Possible sentence starters:

- Je porte (un(e); des) _____. Il est (la couleur, la taille,) Il me fait sentir _____ (e.g., confortable, en sécurité, une partie de ma culture, une partie de ma religion,)

- On porte le (la, les) pour représenter _____

Après la lecture du livre, les élèves vont créer une affiche pour expliquer la phrase suivante et ils vont partager les tresses, les chapeaux, les casquettes, les couvre-chefs:

- Aimer, c'est montrer aux autres ce qui nous fait du bien. Mon (ma, mes) _____
me fait(font) du bien parce que _____

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Other resources

- The Banking Concept of Education - [Paulo Freire and the Development of Critical Pedagogy, Holly Hanks Wanta, Youtube](#).
- [Qu'est-ce que le “rapprochement des cultures” et la culture de la paix](#). Unesco.
- Instructions for Completing Funds of Knowledge. [Exploring Cultural Concepts: Funds of Knowledge handout](#)
- [Leveraging students’ community and families’ funds of Knowledge \(Sleeter, 2015\)](#)
- [Storybooks Canada](#)
- How children eat around the world. [Lumni, Que mangent les enfants aux quatre coins du monde ?](#)
- Books on Indigenous education, [Radio Canada, 10 livres jeunesse autochtones à découvrir](#).